WHAT TO DO AFTER THE FIRE IS OUT

After a fire, why does my house have broken windows and doors, and holes in the roof? Fires produce temperatures greater than 1200 degrees, along with smoke and hot gases. At times, firefighters must eliminate the heat, smoke and hot gases before they can enter to put out the fire. They must ventilate quickly (open roof, windows, et cetera) to help reduce fire spread. Often, firefighters must open walls to find the "hidden" fires, to completely extinguish the fire.

Important Note: The cleaning tips are a general rule to follow. However, each condition requires different techniques. There are contractors who specialize in fire/smoke and water restoration and these companies should be used in most cases.

First Step:

After fire department personnel leave, the building becomes your responsibility. Remove all valuables if you cannot live in the house. Should a firefighter or fire investigator be on the scene, they will accompany you. You are responsible for securing doors and windows and other areas against unauthorized entry and ensuring no further damage occurs to the structure or contents.

Property Insurance:

If you own or are purchasing the property, contact your insurance company and agent as soon as possible. If you are renting or leasing the property, you must also contact the owner. Your insurance agent may be able to assist by providing names of full service fire/smoke and water restoration companies that specialize in securing homes, inventory and removal of contents and 24-hour emergency service.

Note: All items in the building should be inventoried and no item should be thrown away without the approval of the insurance company.

IF YOU CAN'T LIVE IN THE HOUSE

Those individuals in need, who have experienced a fire or other disaster, may obtain assistance from the local American Red Cross. Upon application to the Red Cross, you can obtain food, clothing, lodging and other services. A Red Cross Disaster Caseworker will be happy to assist you day or night. Please call (503) 284-1234, and ask for Emergency Services.

If you must move, please notify the following agencies:

- Notify the Post Office of new address
- Notify bank(s)
- Notify Water Department: (503) 823-7770
- Notify Refuse Collector
- Notify credit card companies
- Check with your local school district
- Notify Social Security Administration: (800) 772-1213
- Notify magazines and newspapers

Construction:

If the building is structurally damaged to the point that it is not habitable, a building inspector will be called. After the building inspection is completed, a permit must be obtained prior to making repairs.

Utilities:

Portland Fire & Rescue (PF&R) will often have the utility services shut off or disconnected as a safety precaution and also to prevent further damage to the structure and its contents. The procedures for re-establishing utility services are as follows:

Electricity:

An electrical inspector must check the wiring to be sure it is safe before the power can be reconnected.

City of Portland: (503) 823-7304Multnomah County: (503) 248-3322

Portland General Electric: (800) 542-8818Pacific Power and Light: (503) 280-5900.

Do not operate wet or damp appliances. Have a serviceman check them first. Electricity and water do not mix!

Water:

The resident may turn the water back on. Use caution because the fire may have damaged the plumbing, which may cause water damage to occur when the pipes are again filled.

Natural Gas:

Do not turn the gas back on. NW Natural Gas has personnel available 24-hours a day to turn on the gas and relight appliances for you. Please call NW Natural Gas at (503) 226-4211.

Telephone:

Contact the telephone company located in your area.

CARE OF DOCUMENTS & BOOKS

Important Documents:

Documents are very important to your well being and can be damaged or destroyed as a result of a fire or other disaster. For this reason, PF&R has provided a list of documents that should be located, if possible. Locating these documents will speed up the process of recovering from a disaster.

- Birth Certificates
- Citizenship Papers
- Driver's License
- Passports
- Social Security Cards
- Insurance Policies
- Automobile Registration
- Automobile Title
- Medical Records

- Title to Deeds
- Income Tax Records
- Military Discharge Papers
- Bank Books/Payment Books
- Credit Cards
- Stocks and Bonds
- Warranties
- Marriage Papers/Divorce Decree
- Wills
- Burial Contracts
- Death Certificates
- Papers for Animals
- Senior Citizen ID Card
- Adult & Family Services ID Card

Adult and Family Services Division clients should notify the office in their area if their I.D. card is damaged or destroyed. This will help eliminate problems if the need arises for check cashing, medical aid or food assistance programs. Please call (503) 229-5236.

Note: It is wise to store all important documents in an approved container that is specifically designed to protect the contents.

Damaged Monies or Securities:

To reclaim paper money and coins, please check with any local commercial bank or contact:

Paper Money

Currency Redemption Division Treasury Department Washington, D.C. 20220

Coins

Superintendent U.S. Assay Office 32 Old Ship New York, NY 10005

U.S. Savings Bonds

U.S. Treasury Department Bureau of Public Debt Divisions of Loans & Currency Attn: Bond Consultant 537 South Clark Street Chicago, IL 60600

Note: Include names and addresses on bonds, appropriate date or time period when purchased, denominations and appropriate number of each.

Care of Books & Important Documents:

Books and other important documents can be dried by placing them on end. Separate pages and let dry or separate pages and place an unmarked dry paper between the pages and press to

prevent crinkling or distorting. If very wet, air dry until damp, sprinkle cornstarch between pages, allow starch to consume moisture, wipe off with dry cloth and press.

CLEANING TIPS

Carpets & Rugs:

A wet/dry vacuum or water extractor carpet-cleaning machine is excellent for wall-to-wall carpet. These can be rented at most supermarkets or drugstores and will remove the standing water and dirt.

If carpets are left wet, they may mold and mildew rapidly and ruin the carpet. They also must be disinfected as soon as possible. Circulating air the in room will aid in the drying process. Contact a full service fire/smoke and water restoration firm listed in the yellow pages of your telephone directory.

Clothing with Soot & Smoke Odor:

Clothing that can withstand bleaching, often can be cleaned by washing in <u>one (1)</u> of the following mixtures:

- To one gallon of water, add: 4-7 tablespoons of Tri-sodium Phosphate to 1 cup Lysol.
 Wash. Rinse with clear water and let dry thoroughly.
- ½ cup of ammonia to two gallons of water. Rinse in vinegar. (Use rubber gloves)

Note: Always read the CARE LABEL, before treating any garments, for proper instructions.

Preparing Clothing for the Cleaners:

Should you have doubts or questions about the cleaning or preparation of clothing, it is wise to contact a full service fire/smoke and water restoration company. Look in the yellow pages of your telephone book.

Combating Odors:

This generally is a very complex problem due to the many varied materials on the market today which are manufactured by combining several raw materials such as natural fibers (cotton, linen, silk, wool, fur fiber, etc.) and man-made fibers (acetate, rayons, acrylics, nylons, polyester, vinyls, etc.) For best results, contact a full service fire/smoke and water restoration company or your Cooperative Extension Service at (503) 254-1500.

Refrigerators & Freezers:

Sometimes odors are difficult to remove due to the dampness of the insulation, which in turn absorbs the odors; however, here are some recommendations:

- Defrost and wash all surfaces with water and dishwashing detergent, rinse with two tablespoons baking soda per quart of water, and re-rinse with clear water.
- Wash with solution of one cup of vinegar to one gallon of water.
- Wash with solution of one-cup household ammonia to one gallon of water.

After one of the alternatives has been used, let the appliance air-dry.

Caution: When cleaning or discarding any refrigerator or freezer, BE SURE THE DOORS ARE REMOVED OR SECURED AGAINST CLOSING ON YOUNG CHILDREN!

Dishes:

Wash dishes in very hot soapy water. Dishwashers are excellent for cleaning dishes due to the high temperature of the water.

Note: Most dishes can be soaked in a solution of 1 tablespoon of ordinary household bleach to 1 gallon of lukewarm water for 30 minutes PRIOR TO WASHING.

Pots and Pans:

Pots and pans can be sterilized by boiling in water for at least10 minutes.

Caution: Some parts (handles, knobs, etc.) of the pots and pans WILL NOT withstand the high temperature involved with boiling water. Remove such where practical.

Leathers:

Wipe with a damp cloth, then with a dry cloth. Stuff your purses, shoes, etc. with paper to retain shape. Leave suitcase open for airing. Steel wool or a suede brush can be used on suede's. Contact a leather and suede cleaners for more information. See yellow pages under "Leather".

CLEANING TIPS & FOOD MANAGEMENT

Walls:

Walls may be washed down while still wet. Use a mild soap or detergent and rubber gloves. Wash a small area at one time, working from ceiling down. Rinse in clear water immediately. Ceilings should be washed first. DO NOT PAINT UNTIL THOROUGHLY DRY. Contact a paint dealer.

Wallpaper (Washable)

- Heat and ventilate room for several days to dry the plaster as well as the paper.
- If mildewed paper is washable, wipe it with cloth wrung out of thick soapsuds, clean with clear water.
- Repaste edges or loosened sections.
- When washing wallpaper, work quickly so paper does not become soaked.
- Work from the top to the bottom to prevent streaking.

Linoleum Floors:

When water gets underneath linoleum and remains there for a period of time, the wood begins to breakdown and odors arise. There are a number of ways to remove or lift the linoleum from the floor. Contact a full service fire/smoke and water restoration company.

For safety, keep all cleaning cloths saturated with cleaning solutions or compounds, other than water, in a metal container equipped with a tight fitting metal cover. OSU/Washington County Extension Service may also be contacted for tips on cleaning and spot removal. Please call s (503) 725-2300.

Mildew:

Mildew is a mold growth. If it is allowed to continue, it will weaken or rot fabrics.

How to remove mildew:

Wash mildew stain with soap and water. Rinse well and dry. If stain remains, use lemon juice and salt, or a solution of a tablespoon of perborate bleach to a pint of lukewarm water, or dilute a solution of household chlorine bleach. Test colored garments before using any treatment.

Upholstered articles, mattresses and rugs:

- Remove loose mold from surfaces by brushing with a broom. Do this outdoors to prevent scattering mildew spores in the house.
- Vacuum surface to draw out more of the mold.
- Thoroughly dry by using an electric heater or fan to carry away moist air.
- If mildew remains, sponge lightly with thick detergent suds using only the foam; wipe with a clean, damp cloth.
- If molds have grown into the inner part of an article, send to a reliable dry cleaner.

Removing white spots on furniture:

- Rub with a cloth wrung out of turpentine or camphorated oil.
- Wipe dry at once and polish with wax or furniture polish.
- For deep spots, use a drop or two of ammonia on a damp cloth and polish.
- A dry mixture of vegetable oil and cigarette ashes rubbed in with the fingertips is often effective in removing white spots.

What to do when a home freezer stops/How long food will stay frozen depends on:

- A full freezer will stay cold many hours longer than a freezer only a quarter full.
- A freezer full of meat will not warm up as fast as a freezer full of baked foods.
- The colder the food, the longer it will stay frozen.
- A well-insulated freezer will keep food frozen much longer than one with little insulation.

If dry ice is placed in the freezer soon after the power is shut off, 25 lbs. should keep the temperature 2 to 3 days in a 10 cubic foot cabinet with half a load; 3 to 4 days in a fully loaded cabinet.

Entire contents of freezer can be moved to a commercial freezer firm. Consider using a friend or neighbors freezer.

Ice or dry ice:

Look in the yellow pages of your telephone directory.

Food: If in doubt, throw it out!

- Partial thawing and refreezing will reduce the quality of foods, particularly in fruits, vegetables and prepared foods,
- It is considered a safe practice to refreeze foods that have partially thawed, if the foods still contain visible ice crystals.

Meats:

These products are unsafe to eat when they begin to spoil. If the color or odor of the thawed product is questionable, get rid of it!

Note: Bacteria multiply very rapidly in thawed or non-refrigerated foods designed for controlled conditions.

Fruit:

Fruits usually ferment as they begin to spoil and generally will absorb smoke or other byproducts of fire, leaving the fruit bitter to the taste and often discolored. It is generally a wise decision to dispose of all such food.

Ice cream or ice milk:

Do not use or eat after the product has melted.

Canned foods in glass jars:

If the canned product was subjected to heat and the jar is cracked or is no longer sealed or should you have doubts about contamination of the food, discard immediately! Contact your local Cooperative Extension Service, (503) 254-1500.

Tin canned foods:

Do not use any canned foods where the can has bulged or is badly dented or has rusted. To disinfect the exterior of a tin can or jar - merely wash the container in a solution of 3 tablespoons of household bleach to 1 gallon of water.

Medicines and cosmetics:

Discard if contamination is suspected.

Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials, which have been damaged by heat, smoke or contamination, should be disposed of. At a minimum, wear rubber gloves while handling hazardous materials.

Asbestos:

If asbestos dust hazard signs are posted, follow these instructions: During the course of firefighting activities, materials, which field-tested positive for Asbestos were damaged. Asbestos poses a serious health risk if safe handling techniques are not used during clean up and disposal of the material. We strongly urge you to contact the Department of Environmental Quality, Air Quality Control Division at (503) 229-6092 and the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration at (503) 229-5951 for guidance. They can provide you copies of rules and information pertaining to safe handling of Asbestos materials. Call Metro Solid Waste Dept. at (503) 221-1646 for an application to dispose of special waste material. Appropriate lab tests should be conducted by your contractor, or person who does the clean-up and repair work, for positive identification of type and percentage of asbestos content of the involved materials.

Hazardous Chemicals:

Pesticides, herbicides, soil sterilants, chlorine based swimming pool disinfectants, poisons, solvents, oil base paint, flammable liquids, industrial chemicals, commercial quantities of any chemicals, or doubtful chemicals - - Contact: Northwest Regional Office of the Department of Environmental Quality, Solid Waste Division, for instructions at (503) 229-5209 and Metro Solid Waste Department.

Charcoal:

Charcoal briquets may spontaneously ignite when damp. They should be disposed of or stored in a non-combustible container with lid, away from other combustibles.

Home Cleaning Products:

Bleaches, cleaning and laundry - WARNING - UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES, MIX AMMONIA WITH ANY OTHER CLEANING PRODUCTS, such as chlorine bleach, Lysol, Tri-sodium Phosphate, Spic and Span, etc. These products can be diluted, separately, with cold water and washed down the drain with plenty of cold water.

Fertilizers: These can be spread on lawns and gardens and watered into the soil in the usual manner.

Do not crush or pound lumps of ammonium nitrate to reduce them to usable size. These lumps are best diluted in water and used as a liquid, water into the soil well so it will not burn your plants.

Reference Directory for After the Fire

Cooperative Extension Service, Cleaning and Food	(503) 254-1500
Department of Environmental Quality	(503) 229-6092
Solid Waste	(503) 229-5913
Property and Income Tax	
Multnomah County Assessor	(503) 248-3326
Federal Income Tax: Portland	(800) 829-1040
Oregon Income Tax	(800) 378-4980
Metropolitan Service District	(503) 221-1646
Public Assistance Clients: Regional Office	
Red Cross Disaster Services	(503) 284-1234
Crisis Hot Lines	(503) 223-6161
Social Security Administration	(800) 772-1213
Portland Fire & Rescue Business Line	(503) 823-3700
Utilities: PGE	(800) 542-8818
Electric: PP&L	(503) 280-5900
Water:	(503) 823-7770
Structural:	(503) 823-7303
NW Natural Gas	(503) 226-4211